

2003 Report of Accomplishments

Walla Walla County Conservation District



Natural Resource Improvements in 2003 – Summary

- *Two Irrigation Efficiency projects were installed this year resulting in over 2400 gallons per minute saved during the irrigation season.*
- *133 fish screens were installed to protect endangered species.*
- *Over 800 acres of riparian buffers were planted this year, adding 44 stream miles for a program total of 87 stream miles.*
- *The Sediment Reduction program enrollment of 2,000 acres resulted in reducing erosion and sediment transfer to area waterways by an estimated 342 tons of sediment.*



Mission of the Walla Walla County Conservation District

- *WWCCD is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of the natural resources of Walla Walla County, facilitated by working on a voluntary basis with landowners to identify opportunities and create solutions, while consistently providing education, information, and assistance whenever possible.*

Water Quality Implementation

- *Water Quality funds were used to leverage state funds at a 1 to 2 ratio to ensure the success of two district programs.*
 - *As part of our Four-Schools stream restoration project, we completed the riparian buffer portion of the Walla Walla High School project, reducing chemical runoff into the stream and protecting the endangered fish using the waterway, as well as providing an outdoor classroom.*
 - *The sediment reduction program is reducing sediment transfer to area waterways at a rate of 342 tons per year.*
- *Water Quality funds were used in an emergency to rebuild flood-damaged fencing. The fence protected a riparian buffer and a vulnerable river from livestock damage.*

Basic Funding

- *Basic Funding dollars made it possible for the District to provide services to landowners and our conservation partners. For example, we are actively engaged in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program with NRCS. Our role is to lead the Local Work Group and assist in producer sign-ups. There is over \$1,000,000.00 earmarked for the Snake River Region—federal dollars that will flow directly into the local economy if area landowners participate. Basic Funding makes it possible for the District to participate and promote programs like these.*

Irrigation Efficiencies

- *This year we completed two Irrigation Efficiency Projects (one funded primarily by BPA) saving over 2,650 gallons per minute (gpm) during the irrigation season. This represents water left in the river to directly benefit the endangered fish species in the basin—both Steelhead and Bull Trout.*
 - *The Probert Irrigation Efficiency Project replaced an open water- flood irrigation system with a state-of-the-art pivot system that saves an average of 2000 gpm during the irrigation season.*
 - *The BPA-funded Gardena Farms project replaced a water-wasting open ditch delivery system with a buried pipe and pumping station, saving over 650 gpm.*
- *Our next project is scheduled for completion by spring of 2004 and will replace another water-wasting open ditch and hand lines with a buried pipe and new pivot system.*
- *We have over 200 irrigators signed up for the Irrigation Efficiency program, 150 on-site farm assessments completed, and 14 irrigation system designs completed.*

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- *Under the CREP program, we added over 800 acres of buffers—that's over 44 miles of streambank restored.*
- *With CREP funding, we signed 41 new contracts. Native grasses and over 490,000 trees and shrubs were planted. Our state funds of \$350,000 matched federal funds of \$3,150,000 for new buffers.*
- *Over 17,000 feet of livestock exclusion fencing were installed to protect newly planted buffers and streams from livestock damage.*
- *The District provided maintenance for over 1,600 acres of riparian forest buffers, repairing flood-damaged sites and following NRCS standards to ensure plant survival during the first two critical years following installation. Our sites are considered by many to be among the best examples of riparian buffer restoration in the region.*

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration—Priority Projects Program

- *WWCCD partnered with the Tri-State Steelheaders and the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla County to initiate a new program to identify and implement high priority projects in the Walla Walla Basin. The first project removed a fish barrier and potential flood hazard, replacing a low-profile bridge with a ford to allow the river to flow unobstructed.*
- *The Lower Walla Walla Buffer Program is an ambitious effort to restore an 8-10 mile reach of the Walla Walla River that is actively eroding. We are partnering with the US Army Corps of Engineers to develop ready-to-construct plans to stabilize the river and re-vegetate the riparian corridor.*

Small Farm Programs: Screens, Meters, and Sediment Reduction Program

- *All irrigators are required to install an approved fish screen. Our screening program has provided cost-share to install 133 WDFW-approved fish screens. In addition, we have completed 375 screen assessments and 250 screen designs.*
- *Our Sediment Reduction program helps landowners begin low disturbance tillage. With 2000 acres enrolled in the program, an estimated 342 tons of sediment per year are kept out of area waterways.*
- *Irrigators are also required to install water meters to comply with state regulations. Under our new metering program we have over 100 interested landowners signed up, 90 completed designs, and nine meters installed to date.*

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- *The District is involved in multiple endangered species planning forums representing area stakeholders. These planning forums include Bi-State Habitat Conservation Planning, Walla Walla Watershed Planning, Snake River Recovery Planning (SRFBoard) and Walla Walla Sub-basin Planning.*
- *The District runs the burn-permit program in cooperation with Walla Walla County and DOE.*

Information & Education

- *Thanks to generous contributions of local businesses, the District was able to send seven students to the Inland Empire Natural Resources Youth Camp.*
- *We hosted four public meetings to educate the public about District programs, assisted the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board in a tour of restoration projects, and shared a conservation booth at the fair.*
- *We published three newsletters with a circulation of over 1,100 and sent several direct mailings.*

Washington Conservation Districts--assisting land managers with their conservation choices

Wa-Hi stream restoration, right

